

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 07361 211440Z

64

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-07 L-02 ACDA-05

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1197

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US MISSION NATO 2685

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 7361

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, IT

SUBJECT: RESTRUCTURING ITALIAN FORCES

REF: ROME 7270

1. IN MEETING WITH MINISTER OF DEFENSE FORLANI TODAY(MAY20), AMBASSADOR CONGRATUALTED MINISTER ON RECENT PASSAGE OF TEN-YEAR NAVAL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM BY PARLIAMENT AND EXPRESSED HOPE SIMILAR LEGISLATION WOULD BE FORTHCOMING TO SUPPORT MODERNIZATION OF ITALIAN ARMY AND AIR FORCE, TO PERMIT THEM CONTINUE TO PLAY THEIR VITAL ROLE ON THE ALLIANCE'S SOUTHERN FLANK.

2. FORLANI WAS CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR THE ARMY AND AIR FORCE PROCUREMENT LEGISLATION. WHEN THE U.S. SUGGESTS THAT THE ALLIES SHOULD BE SPENDING MORE ON DEFENSE, HE SAID, IT SHOULD REMEMBER THAT THE LEGISLATION THE MOD HAS OBTAINED FOR THE ITALIAN NAVY AND IS SEEKING FOR THE ARMY AND AIR FORCE REPRESENTS SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF FUNDING ABOVE AND BEYOND THE NORMAL ANNUAL DEFENSE BUDGET. HE HAS FOUND LITTLE POLITICAL OPPOSITION FROM EITHER THE FAR RIGHT OR LEFT TO THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION. THE OBSTACLE IS A SIMPLE LACK OF MONEY, NOT A LACK OF POLITICAL SUPPORT. IN HIS VIEW, EITHER THE NATION DECIDED TO HAVE AN ARMY OR NOT (THAT TOO WAS AN OPTION). BUT IF IT WANTED AN ARMY AT THIS TIME IN
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PAGE 02 ROME 07361 211440Z

HISTORY, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE A FLEXIBLE, HIGHLY MOBILE, WELL-

EQUIPPED FORCE. IN SIMPLE TERMS, MODERNIZATION IS EXPENSIVE
BUT HE WAS DETERMINED TO ACHIEVE IT.VOLPE

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Message Attributes

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